Caldwell starves self at jail

By MARY ANN KUHN

Lawrence Daniel Caldwell, a suspect in a policeman's slaying and bank holdup, has slashed his wrists, refused to talk or eat and is being kept alive today by D. C. Jail doctors who feed him Metrecal thru a tube in his stomach.

For the past six weeks, Mr. Caldwell, 25, has been confined to a bed in a hospital ward of the jail. His lawyer, Edward J. Menard, said "he slashed his wrists" sometime during confinement either at St. Elizabeths Hospital or the jail.

"He had a number of razor cuts on his wrist," Mr. Menard said.

While St. Elizabeths Hospital officials could not be reached for comment a spokesman from the D. C. Department of Corrections denied that the wrist-slashing occurred at the jail. He said that Mr. Caldwell is being fed thru a tube to his stomach because "he won't eat. He won't talk to doctors or correctional officers or anyone.

"He won't tell anyone why he's doing it," the spokesman said.

Mr. Menard said, "I think he would have died if the doctors had not done something."

A former musician who played clarinet for three years for the Akron Symphony Orchestra under Louis Lane, Mr. Caldwell and two other suspects are awaiting trial on charges of first degree murder. No date has been set for the trial.

Heidi Ann Fletcher, 21, daughter of the former District Deputy Mayor Thomas W. Fletcher, and her boyfriend, Eros Anthony Timm, 22, are charged with Mr. Caldwell in the May 25 slaying of Officer William Sigmon after a holdup at the National Permanent Federal Savings and Loan, 5185 MacArthur Boulevard-nw.

Miss Fletcher is the only one of the three to be released from jail.

A corrections department spokesman said that jail officials maintain a daily log on Mr. Caldwell's condition, jotting down "everything he does, everything he eats." Logging an inmate's condition is also a procedure used in "hunger-strike cases" where prisoners fast or refuse to eat, he said.

The spokesman said that jail doctors apparently do not feel that Mr. Caldwell's condition warrents sending him to D.C. General Hospital where "serious cases" are transferred.

Mr. Menard said that whenever he or co-counsel Charles Murray Jr. visit Mr. Caldwell, "he gives no reaction. He doesn't react at all. No, he doesn't talk."

Even tho St. Elizabeths psychiatrists diagnosed Mr. Caldwell and the other two suspects on August 19 "mentally competent" to stand trial, Mr. Menard said that he has a motion pending before U. S. District Court Judge June Green seeking permission to have a team of "outside" psychiatrists examine Mr. Caldwell.

Mr. Menard also said that Mr. Caldwell "for the past seven years" has been a vegetarian.

"At St. Elizabeths, they let his friends bring in vegetables, beans, but you can't at the jail," he said.

When Mr. Caldwell, Miss Fletcher and Mr. Trimm pleaded innocent to first degree murder charges at their Aug. 24 arraignment before Judge Green, Mr. Menard had to lead Mr. Caldwell to the podium, "so he could enter his plea."

LAWRENCE CALDWELL

"Then I had to enter a plea on Mr. Caldwell's behalf because he just stared vacantly . . . like a zombie. He looked like he lost 80 pounds," Mr. Menard said.

The 6-foot-5 Caldwell weighed about 175 pounds when he was arrested.

C&P tracks down dial-a-frauders

By JERRY OPPENHEIMER

The Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Co. today revealed that an unknown number of "Phone Phreaks" in the metropolitan area are bilking the company of thousands of dollars annually by dialing illegal free calls across and sometimes out of the country by means of an inexpensive gadget called a "blue box."

The "blue boxes," usually home-made in a few hours at a cost of $100 or more, are being made from plans circulated around the country by other "Phone Phreaks." The electronic device, which can be as small as a pack of cigarets, generates sounds and tones that can switch telephone equipment from coast to coast without cost to the caller.

Since the beginning of the year more than a dozen cases have come to the attention of C&P investigators. One middle-aged Montgomery County couple has already been convicted, and clandestine investigations involving stake-outs and the use of electronic monitoring devices and computers are being used in the other cases.

C&P investigators told The News they expected arrests soon and emphasized that when one "blue box" is found in use, it usually leads to a "whole slew" of other persons involved.

Nationally, there have been 33 arrests so far this year with 18 convictions and 14 cases still pending. Twenty of those arrested, according to a survey made by concerned phone company officials, were students and all of the suspects had a sophisticated electronics interest or background. Four so-called "Phone Phreaks" were arrested just this week in Philadelphia. Two of them were long-time phone company employes.

The 24 companies in the Bell System claim they are losing more than $500,000 annually to the little box.

Earl A. Connor, staff supervisor of C&P security here, said in an interview that use of the device has become "more widespread in this area this year. We have investigations underway in the District, Virginia and Maryland. Based on cases around the country, we expect that our investigations will tie in a large group of people."

Mr. Connor made a "blue box" available to The News. The device, not blue, but encased in black plastic with a metal top measured 6 by 3½ inches and weighed less than a pound. The top of the box contained a series of 14 buttons, a switch and a jack plug. The device had been confiscated from a "Phone Phreak."

The box is attached to the phone and an area code is dialed, plus the number 555-1212. This connects the "Phone Phreak" caller to the information operator in the specific area. Once connected, the caller throws the switch on the box, which disconnects the operator but leaves the line open into the area. He then uses the black buttons to punch any telephone number in the area without having the call recorded for charge purposes.

"Phone Phreaks" are also using the 800 area code, used by a number of national firms to allow customers to call toll free.

"I've tested the box," said Mr. Connor. "It works. I have dialed some calls out of the country to test it."

Joseph B. Heil Jr., also a C&P security supervisor, said in an interview that, "It's become possible to compromise our system. It's possible to compromise any system with checks and balances. There is concern over this in our business. We think the privacy of communications is a right and the actual cost of these follies is being borne by the subscribers."

Mr. Connor said telephone company computers usually give the first indication that a "Phone Phreak" is at work. The computers show that the amount of time used for information calls are taking more time than the usual two or three minutes.

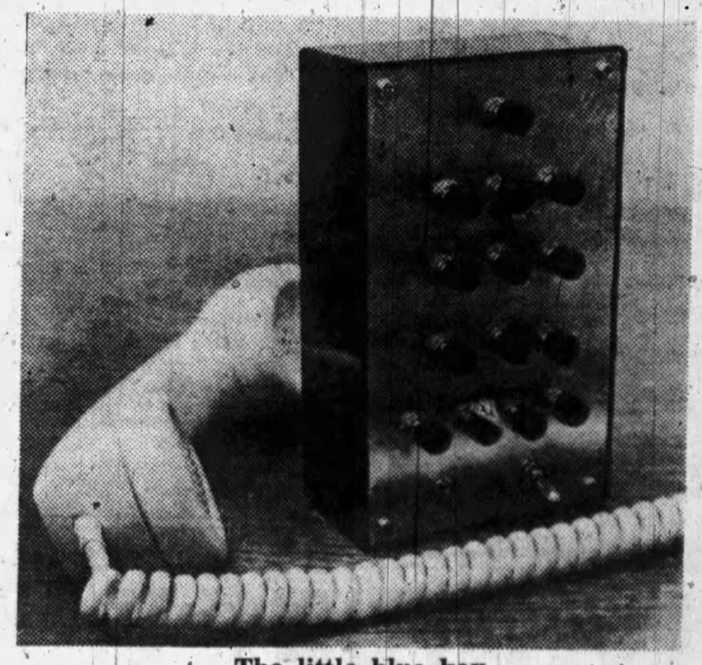
At that point, the phone company brings more elaborate tracking equipment into play, usually leading to a particular phone and ending with an arrest after a three-month or longer investigation.

But, it's believed that more "Phone Phreaks" are escaping the phone company net than are being caught.

"These people are exhibitionists," declared the investigators. "They brag about how they can get around the phone company and usually we get a tip on them."

In one local case, still under investigation, Mr. Connor said a golfing partner told him that his son had a friend who was making a number of calls from the West Coast where he attended school. He was bragging about the little device he was using to make the calls without charge.

Mr. Heil and Mr. Connor emphasized that the goal of the current local investigations is to find the source of the plans for making the devices and take him and the plans out of circulation.



The little blue box.

'Phone Phreaks' abound here

Laws governing fraudulent use of telephones in the District, Maryland and Virginia are strict and the penalties harsh.

In Maryland, a "Phone Phreak" could be sentenced to six months in prison, fined $500 or both. Virginia has two laws — one for phone fraud under $100 which has a penalty of six months in jail, $500 fine or both; and over $100, with a penalty of 1 to 10 years in prison, a $500 fine or both. In the District, Phone Phreaking is a federal offense with penalties of up to 5 years in prison, $1,000 fine or both.

C&P investigators are asking that anyone with information about such activities should phone the C&P security office, 392-3861.

'Any halfwit could outsmart a computer'

"When the word got out that I could build a blue box and use it with success, I started getting all kinds of offers from lots of prominent people — lawyers, stockbrokers, government types. And I got calls from bookies and numbers people in the District, too. They offered me as high as $1200 per box. I could understand the bookies and the numbers guys wanting one. But the brokers? Hell, I guess those guys get some pretty stiff phone bills . . ."

Sgt. Toll Free, as he is known in the underground world of phone phreaks, was slumped in the deep cushions of a long, low butcher block framed sofa, facing a large picture window that looks out over his wooded half-acre in a well-to-do suburb of the District.

Sgt. Toll Free was talking about his hobby, making illegal free telephone calls using a little device known as a blue box, and his main goal in life: "I would like to see everyone using a blue box. I would like to see my plans for the blue box distributed across the country, published for everyone to see."

Sgt. Toll Free refused to allow his name to be used, saying, "I may be getting paranoid but I think they may be watching the house and tapping the phone."

"They" are investigators for the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. who disclosed to The Washington Daily News today that they were conducting investigations into phone phreaking in the Washington area.

Sgt. Toll Free, who has an extensive electronics background, said he stumbled across the possibilities of phone phreaking a few summers ago "when I ran across an ad in an electronics magazine. I sent away and received a catalog offering all kinds of esoteric phone company equipment. I had a feeling I might be able to use some of that equipment at a later date, so I filed the catalog away. The guy who ran the company is now living somewhere in the South Pacific."

Sometime later, while Sgt. Toll Free was making a long distance call which "I was tape recording for business reasons" he heard all these strange noises on the phone. "I played back the tape and then put the tone which I heard on an audio analyzer."

After some research, Sgt. Toll Free had an engineer friend design oscillators for each telephone tone and he himself designed the push button mechanism. A blue box was born.

Sgt. Toll Free said he has used his blue box to make phone calls to Canada and around the country but "I haven't called Europe because I don't know anyone there but I know I could do it.

"And the phone company will never catch me because I'm ahead of them. I know the methods they are now using to catch phone phreaks and I can circumvent these methods."

Taking a sip from a martini, Sgt. Toll Free bragged, "I've made some real nice models, solid state all the way. I could make you a nice one, a real nice one that you could put in your vest pocket. But I've never sold one. I won't let mine out of my den. I would just like to see other people learn how to build them."

As for the future of phone phreaking, Sgt. Toll Free predicted, "There's enough bright kids studying electronics and engineers with a lot of spare time on their hands who can build these things. A hell of a mess of them. Each one of them more and more advanced. The phone company computers are too straight forward to catch these people. Any half-wit electrician could get around those computers."